

Message Text

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70

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 L-03 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 VO-03

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EB-11 SPC-03 OMB-01 USIA-15 IO-15 DRC-01 /171 W

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8172

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 7280

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, MX

SUBJECT: SECRETARY'S MEETING WITH FOREIGN SECRETARY RABASA.

REF: MEXICO 7261

1. AS INDICATED REFTTEL, RABASA HAS SAID ONLY MAJOR PROBLEM HE WOULD DISCUSS WITH SECRETARY KISSINGER DURING FORTHCOMING TRIP UNGA IS THAT OF MEXICAN ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS IN U.S. RABASA AND OTHER HIGH MEXICAN OFFICIALS HAVE PREVIOUSLY SAID THIS PRINCIPAL OUTSTANDING ISSUE IN U.S.-MEXICAN RELATIONS, SINCE SETTLEMENT OF COLORADO RIVER SALINITY PROBLEM.

2. BASED ON RECENT COMMENTS OF PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA, RABASA AND OTHERS, WE BELIEVE FOREIGN SECRETARY'S APPROACH WILL PRIMARILY INVOLVE PROPOSALS ALONG FOLLOWING LINES:

A. NEW BRACERO PROGRAM FOR MEXICAN WORKERS TO ENTER U.S. RABASA WOULD PROBABLY RETAIN OPEN MIND ON SIZE OF PROGRAM AND MIGHT AGAIN SAY MEXICO COULD ACCEPT TACIT UNDERSTANDING THAT BRACEROS COULD RECEIVE WAGES BELOW U.S. MINIMUM.

B. ADJUSTMENT ("REGULARIZATION") OF STATUS (AS DISCUSSED BY RABASA WITH DEPUTY SECRETARY RUSH ON JULY 9) FOR "LONG TERM" (UNDERFINED) ILLEGALS. EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THIS WOULD REQUIRE
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CONGRSSIONAL ACTION AND RABASA HAS BEEN APPRISED OF THIS EARLIER.

C. RABASA MAY SUGGEST, AS DID PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA IN RECENT CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR, THE U.S. LABOR UNIONS' OPPOSITION TO NEW BRACERO PROGRAM COULD BE OVERCOME THROUGH PROGRAM TO ALLOW BRACEROS "TEMPORARY MEMBERSHIP" (DUES PAYING) IN U.S. TRADE UNIONS.

3. EMBASSY SUGGESTIONS ARE BASED ON FOLLOWING PREMISES:

A. EMBASSY HAS REPEATEDLY BEEN INFORMED FROM WASHINGTON THAT A NEW BRACERO PROGRAM IS NOT A REALISTIC PROPOSAL DUE TO CONTINUED STRONG OPPOSITION OF U.S. LABOR GROUPS, CHICANO MOVEMENT, STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS WHO FACED WITH PROBLEM OF WELFARE BURDEN POSED BY INDIGENT ILLEGALS (E.G., SAN DIEGO HOSPITAL SITUATION AMOUNTING TO SEVERAL HUNDRED THOUSANDS OF DOLLAR COST). THIS OPPOSITION AND U.S. UNEMPLOYMENT SITUATION WOULD MAKE CONGRESSIONAL ACCEPTANCE OF BRACERO PROGRAM VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE, ACCORDING TO WHAT WE HAVE BEEN TOLD.

B. EVEN IF FACTORS IN PRECEDING PARAGRAPH NOT PRESENT, NEW BRACERO PROGRAM MIGHT NOT REDUCE -- AND INDEED MIGHT STIMULATE -- FLOW OF ILLEGALS TO U.S.

C. LEGISLATION TO ADJUST STATUS OF LONG-TERM ILLEGALS WOULD BE PROBLEMATIC AND SLOW, WOULD AFFECT ONLY MINORITY OF PRESENT ILLEGALS, AND WOULD SUFFER FROM DEFECTS NOTED IN PARAGRAPH B. ABOVE.

4. PREMISES CITED ABOVE REFLECT INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE PROVIDED TO EMBASSY ON THIS SUBJECT UP TO THE PRESENT. IF THESE PREMISES REMAIN VALID, EMBASSY WOULD SUGGEST THAT RESPONSES TO RABASA MIGHT LOGICALLY BE ALONG FOLLOWING LINES:

A. NEW BRACERO PROGRAM OR ADJUSTMENT OF STATUS OF LONGTERM ILLEGALS WOULD FACE SUCH STRONG OPPOSITION IN SUBSTANTIAL SECTORS U.S. PUBLIC AND CONGRESS THAT THEY ARE NOT REALISTIC PROSPECTS. EVEN IF THESE PROPOSALS WERE FEASIBLE, THEY WOULD NOT SOLVE PROBLEM OF PRESENT ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION TO U.S. AND MIGHT INCREASE FLOW.

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B. AS OFFICIALS ON BOTH SIDES HAVE REPEATEDLY RECOGNIZED, ONLY REAL SOLUTION TO ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION PROBLEM IS THROUGH MEXICAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OVER TIME TO ACCOMMODATE POPULATION INCREASE.

C. U.S. WILLING TO WORK WITH MEXICO TOWARD PROCEDURES WHICH WOULD ASSURE JUST AND HUMANE TRATMENT OF ILLEGALS IN U.S., TO EXTENT THIS POSSIBLE IN SITUATION WHERE ILLEGALS BY DEFINITION ARE VULNERABLE TO EXPLOITATION BECAUSE OF THEIR STATUS AND

THEIR TENDENCY TO AVOID CONTACT WITH U.S. AUTHORITIES.

D. GIVEN FACTORS 4.A. AND 4.B. ABOVE, WE SUGGEST SECRETARY IMPRESS UPON RABASA EARLIER RECOMMENDATIONS MADE TO HIM BY U.S. OFFICIALS THAT PUBLICITY AND PUBLIC AGITATION OF THIS ISSUE BY GOM OFFICIALS CAN DO NO GOOD AND IS IN FACT HARMFUL TO INTERESTS OF BOTH COUNTRIES.

E. SECRETARY RABASA, AS INDICATION OF SERIOUSNESS OF GOM EFFORT, WILL LIKELY REFER TO RECENT ACTIONS OUTLINED AT TIME OF JULY DISCUSSIONS IN WASHINGTON. AT EMBASSY LEVEL, CONSULTATIONS PROCEEDING AND SOME PROGRESS BEING MADE WITH RESPECT TO PROCEDURAL RECOMMENDATIONS RESULTING FROM THOSE DISCUSSIONS.
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